

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01
INR-05 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00 EB-04 TRSE-00
OMB-01 OIC-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 /038 W
-----065491 270515Z /11

O 270419Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4887

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 06740

LIMDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEAN, E

SUBJECT: US/ASEAN ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS

1. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. SUMMARY. ASEAN STANDING COMMITTEE MET APRIL 20-21 IN BANGKOK AND REACHED CONSENSUS THAT AUGUST 3-4 DATE WOULD BE MORE SUITABLE FOR SECOND US/ASEAN MEETING, BUT THAT DATE WOULD HAVE TO BE CONFIRMED TO GOP BY MEMBER COUNTRIES. THAIS OBJECTED TO MEETING ON MINISTERIAL LEVEL. STANDING COMMITTEE AGREED THAT ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS, FOLLOWING THEIR ANNUAL MINISTERIAL MEETING, WOULD MEET WITH JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER SONODA ON JUNE 17 IN PATTAYA. END SUMMARY. END CONFIDENTIAL.

2. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. DFA HAS INFORMED US THAT THE STANDING COMMITTEE (SC) AT ITS MEETING ON APRIL 20-21
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IN BANGKOK ARRIVED AT CONSENSUS THAT AUGUST 3-4 DATE FOR SECOND US/ASEAN MEETING WAS "MORE SUITABLE" BUT FINAL CONFIRMATION WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE TO GOP BY MEMBER GOVERNMENTS. REPORT WAS SILENT ON LEVEL OF MEETING.

3. REGARDING DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION TALKS, GOP PRESENTED SCHEDULE FOR ASEAN EXPERTS (MAY 22-24) AND PREPARA-

TORY (MAY 29 MEETING), AND FOR JOINT WORKING GROUP MEETING WITH U.S. MAY 30-31 IN MANILA. NO DECISION WAS TAKEN, AND DFA EXPECTS THERE MAY BE SOME PRESSURE FOR POSTPONEMENT BUT HOPES TO HOLD THE LINE. PHILIPPINE PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS BEING SENT SEPTTEL.

4. DURING DISCUSSION OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION OTHER ASEAN REPRESENTATIVES MENTIONED THAT THE USG WAS GOING TO COMMIT 30 MILLION DOLLARS FOR REGIONAL PROJECTS. THEY ATTRIBUTED SOURCE TO GOP. DFA REPRESENTATIVE IMMEDIATELY CHALLENGED THIS FIGURE AND ATTRIBUTION, AND SAID THAT U.S. EMBASSY IN MANILA DID NOT GIVE ANY FIGURE NOR HAD GO ITSELF EVER HEARD OF SUCH A FIGURE. EMBOFF IMMEDIATELY CONFIRMED ABOVE STATEMENT C.F. STATE 069052 AND MANILA 4789. DFA INTENDS TO REINFORCE ITS CORRECTION OF THIS MISUNDERSTANDING AND WILL SEND COPY OF ITS COMMUNICATION TO EMBASSY. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

5. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING WAS UNUSUALLY LONG, WITH TWO DAYS AND LATE EVENINGS FOR THE PREPARATORY MEETING AT THE DIRECTOR OR SECRETARY GENERAL LEVEL, AND 30 MINUTES FOR SC PROPER CHAIRED BY THAI FOREIGN MINISTER UPADIT. MOST IMPORTANT MATTER OF INTEREST TO USG WAS SC AGREEMENT THAT IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING ON JUNE 14-16 IN PATTAYA, THE FOREIGN MINISTERS WOULD MEET WITH JAPANESE FOREIGN SECRET

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MINISTER SONODA. THIS ASEAN/JAPANESE MEETING WAS AT THE GOJ'S REQUEST. END CONFIDENTIAL.

6. BEGIN SECRET/NOFORN. PREPARATORY SC MEETING ACTUALLY REACHED AGREEMENT ON A MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETING ON AUGUST 3-4 WITH THE UNITED STATES. EARLIER EXCHANGES REVEALED THAT ROMULA ACCEPTED FIRST AND SAID HE WOULD HEAD THE GOP DELEGATION. RAJARATNAM THEN SAID HE WOULD GO. GOI REPLIED THAT IF ALL FOREIGN MINISTERS ATTEND, MOCHTAR WOULD HEAD INDONESIAN DELEGATION. AT BANGKOK MEETING GOM ANNOUNCED THAT NEW AUGUST 3-4 DATE WAS ACCEPTABLE AND THAT RITHAUDEEN WOULD GO. THAI SYG THEP SIGNIFIED NO OBJECTIONS TO DATE BUT DID NOT SAY WHO WOULD REPRESENT GOT.

7. DURING SC MEETING PROPER WHICH HE CHAIRED, UPADIT, HOWEVER, EXPRESSED STRONG RESERVATIONS ABOUT A MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETING IN WASHINGTON. HE QUESTIONED WHETHER ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS SHOULD JOURNEY EN MASSE TO WASHINGTON WHERE THERE WOULD LIKELY BE LITTLE SUBSTANCE OR CONCRETE ACHIEVEMENT FROM MEETING. HE CONTRASTED ASEAN MINISTERS GOING TO WASHINGTON WITH JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER ASKING TO COME TO SEE THEM IN PATTAYA. FINALLY, HE

INDICATED THAI CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE VIETNAMESE REACTION TO SUCH A MEETING IN WASHINGTON. LAST POINT WAS PROBABLY REAL REASON FOR THAI HESITANCY, IN VIEW OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS. COMMENT. INTERESTING TWIST OF EVENTS WAS THAT THAI PRINCIPALS WERE APPREHENSIVE WHILE WORKING LEVEL WAS NOT, WHEREAS MALAYSIAN WORKING LEVEL WAS APPREHENSIVE WHILE GOM MINISTERS WERE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE MINISTERIAL. END COMMENT.

8. OTHER PARTICIPANTS WERE SURPRISED AT THIS UNEXPECTED BOMBSHELL. THEP WAS UNHAPPY WHEN HE WAS BUTTONHOLED LATER ABOUT HIS EARLIER ACQUIESCENCE OR SILENCE. TAN BOO SENG STATED THAT UPADIT DID NOT MENTION HIS RESERVATIONS

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TO RAJARATNAM DURING HIS RECENT TOUR. UPADIT DID EXPRESS HIS RESERVATIONS TO ROMULO ON THAT TRIP, BUT IMMEDIATELY ADDED THAT THEY COULD THRASH THIS OUT IN SC. INSTEAD, UPADIT LEFT THE SC IN INDECISION BUT PROMISED TO PRESENT HIS VIEWS IN WRITING TO HIS COUNTERPARTS IN THE NEXT WEEK OR SO.

9. DFA BELIEVES THAT THE GOT WOULD EVENTUALLY COME AROUND IN VIEW OF THE SOLID SUPPORT FOR A MINISTERIAL BY THE

OTHER FOUR COUNTRIES. IN THE MEANTIME, HOWEVER, VALUABLE TIME IS BEING LOST. DFA STRESSES THAT IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO INDICATE THAT THE MEETING WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL TO WARRANT THE ATTENDANCE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS, AND SUGGESTED THAT SECRETARY VANCE PRESIDE THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE MEETING.

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10. COMMENT. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THE AUGUST 3-4 DATE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS ACCEPTABLE, AND THAT PLANNING SHOULD CONTINUE ON THAT BASIS. IN THE MEANTIME, WE SUGGEST THAT THE OTHER FOUR ASEAN COUNTRIES, HAVING COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO A MINISTERIAL, BE THE ONES TO PERSUADE THE THAIS TO COME ALONG. WHAT USG COULD DO IS TO INDICATE CLEARLY THAT A MINISTERIAL IS WARRANTED -- BY THE HIGH LEVEL PARTICIPATION OF USG OFFICIALS AND BY IMPORTANCE OF THE TALKS THEMSELVES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR ASEAN AND THE UNITED STATES. WE FURTHER SUGGEST THAT WE DO THIS THROUGH GOP AS POINT OF CONTACT, AND GOP IN TURN CAN THEN WORK ON THE THAIS. END COMMENT. END SECRET/NOFORN. STULL

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